The Builder.

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THE destruction of St. Anne's Church, at Limehouse, by fire, on Good Friday, suggests a point or two for consideration, and ought to serve as a warning and preventive. St. Anne's, Limehouse, was one of the fifty churches erected by Act of Parliament in the reign of Queen Anne, and was designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor. It was commenced in 1712, completed in 1724, but not consecrated until the 12th of September, 1730,* in which year the parish was formed by Act of Parliament out of the hamlet of Limehouse and part of that of Ratcliffe, original appendages to the parish of St. Dunstan, Stepney. Stowe speaks of "Lime-hurst or lime-host, corruptly called lime-house;" and Pepys has the following note under the date 9th October, 1661:—"By coach to Captain Marshe's, at Limehouse, to a house that hath been their ancestors' for this 250 years, close by the lime-house, which gives the name to the place."

St. Anne's is a (Portland) stone church of very large size (called 145 feet by 78 feet in gross), with a lofty tower and steeple: it had four stone composite columns inside carrying the ceiling, and is said to have cost 38,000*l*. The east window contained a painting on glass by Buckler, "Christ Preaching on the Mount;" and there was an organ, built by Bridge, which cost 1,000*l*. Nothing of these remain but the memory. The interior of the church is wholly destroyed. The fire broke out between the ceiling and the roof; the roof fell, and everything below that was combustible was burnt. Much of the stone-work is calcined, including part of the steeple, high up.

Now as to the cause. We journeyed eight miles out and eight miles back the other day to look at this for ourselves, but the chief fireman in charge, although we told him our errand, would allow us no glimpse inside, and was not in a fit state for us to discuss the question with him to any purpose. We must take, therefore, the statements of others.

The interior of the church is approached by a lofty flight of steps, and in consequence of this elevation, the vaults are above ground, with the exception of about 3 feet of their height, and have, at the end of paved passages which traverse them, windows opening into the churchyard. In these passages at either end of the church stand hot air stoves, by means of which the edifice was warmed. They were fed with air from an opening made for the purpose in one wall; and the smoke descending, first passed through a flue underground to the opposite side of the church, where it entered another flue in the centre of the main wall, having an escape on the roof. This latter flue, which is about 18 inches square, in a wall of 4 feet 6 inches thick, was part of the architect's original design. There are four such in each wall, and their purpose appears to have originally been to ventilate the vaults. When the present stoves were put up, use was made of one of these flues on each side of the church for the escape of the smoke from the furnaces. About five weeks ago, in consequence of the descending flues frequently becoming stopped up, an iron pipe 12 inches in diameter was substituted for the common brick flue previously connecting the furnace with the old flue in the centre of the wall. A small furnace was also inserted at the junction of the iron pipe with the wall, where the stoker has been accustomed, when about to light the fires, to burn a handful of shavings, in order to get the damp air out of the flue traversing the wall. The draught was very strong, and probably carried up the shavings in a state of ignition. Now examination, it appears, has shown that the end of one of the girders supporting the roof, actually *entered the flue*, at the north-western corner of the church, and it is unnecessary for us to say, if this be so, the beam, too, being thoroughly dried by the continued action of the fire, perhaps even decayed, that the cause of the destruction of the church is tolerably obvious.

The fires which have been originated by timber being let into flues, apparently too far from the fireplace to be dangerous, are not to be counted. In a sixteenth century building, wherein works are going on under our direction, we found last week a piece of timber in the face of the chimney-breast, put in to relieve the lintel over the opening of the fireplace, and forming, in part, one side of the flue. It was black and charred, and although it had led to no evil consequences during many years, might next week have caused the destruction of the building.

In the case of Limehouse Church, if the statement be correct, no blame attaches to the architect: the flue was for ventilation, not for a furnace; and the error was committed by those who made the fire communicate with it, without first taking proper precautions.

The principal object we have in view in noting this occurrence, is to induce a proper examination, by professional eyes, of the city churches generally, with respect especially to the means used for warming them. Several of these churches are exposed to great danger by the position of iron smoke-pipes, introduced to the great disfigurement of the building, and passing close to woodwork. We would exhort the authorities to be wise in time,—to remove the possibility of danger, so far as it can be foreseen, and insure the building.

The annual loss to the community by fire is something enormous, and, unfortunately, the experience gained so dearly, produces little improvement. The recent destruction of an immense amount of property in a Manchester warehouse, in a singularly short time, ought to produce an alteration in the mode of constructing these buildings; yet in all probability the old course will still be pursued. If it were desired to construct a building capable of being burnt down in the shortest possible time, a better model than that offered by some of the Manchester warehouses could scarcely be hit on,—with its large well-holes, wooden staircases, and continuous wood linings and casings.

To return, however, to Limehouse Church. Judging from the exterior of the building, we should say the walls may be kept standing; and, fortunately (this should serve as another hint to churchwardens), the edifice was insured at the beginning of the year, as we are told, in the face of some opposition, for 5,000*l*.—so that the expense to the parish will not be ruinous. Had the steeple fallen, we certainly should not have counselled *restoration*. It is an incongruous and inharmonious composition, very far inferior to other works by the same architect, and has little to recommend it beyond something of grandeur resulting from its size and mass. In St. George's, Bloomsbury, and St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard-street, Hawksmoor established his claim to be considered a man of genius and skill: if the evidence had been confined to St. Anne's, Limehouse, our verdict would have been different.

Hawksmoor (few of our readers will need reminding) was placed with Sir Christopher Wren, as a pupil, in his 17th year (he was born 1666, the year of the great fire), and was afterwards deputy-surveyor under Wren, at Chelsea College, and clerk of the works at Greenwich Hospital. He was appointed superintending surveyor to all the new churches after the death of Wren, and is said to have been associated with Vanbrugh at Blenheim and Castle Howard. Like that poet-architect, whom, too, he in some degree resembles in style, his fame long suffered from an *epigram*, but has now outgrown it.

* Malcolm's Londinum Redivivum, vol. ii., p. 81.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE DAY.

MUCH has been already said on the architectural vices and follies of the age, and some points in the following paper have doubtless been touched upon by others; I have, however, restricted it to the expression of my own views on the subjects adverted to. As these refer chiefly to design, I would first observe, that this is the highest department of the art, which gives it its greatest dignity, and calls for the noblest faculties of the mind. Judgment, taste, fancy, feeling, imagination, are all called into play in designing a perfect edifice, which is a production of "the vision and the faculty divine," and is of the same category as an epic, a statute, a picture, or a symphony. The claims of architecture to the respect of mankind are of a peculiar nature: unlike its sister arts, painting and sculpture, it is also a science: it has to satisfy the material wants of man, his social and sanitary requirements. Art, however, is greater than science, and the architect has cause to be proud of his connection with it. This is a feeling in which, of course, the student may participate, and not only the student, but the operative, may share it. Art sheds a halo around the lowest of her votaries, and to make this more generally understood, would perhaps be to furnish the means of hallowing and ennobling the minds of thousands, and snatching many a victim from the jaws of vice. Nothing is more common than to see intelligent workmen taking an interest and pride in the scientific part of their work, beyond the mere discharge of their duty, or the obtaining of their livelihood: why should they not in the artistic? The mason or joiner would certainly be none the worse if given to know the true nature and relations of his daily occupation; that, though his own part may be comparatively humble, and mechanical, it is a vehicle, or may be so, for the intuitions and inspirations of genius. Such a knowledge might inspire him with greater zeal to attain to excellence in his work, which is by no means unimportant. No architect is quite independent of the mechanic for his reputation. The production of the beautiful is, in some measure, dependent on the efforts and feeling of the workman. To produce a perfect work all employed must go hand in hand: one feeling should animate them. Holding widely different ranks, they yet, with torch in hand, form one grand procession to the shrine of the beautiful. But, to my immediate subject.

The great objection that has been urged against the architecture of the present century is, direct undiscriminating imitation of ancient buildings, to the neglect of originality, consistency of character, and other qualities. On this I would offer a remark *en passant*:—whilst acknowledging the servility of direct imitation or copying, yet I consider a broad estimate of the recent state of architecture would look upon this and the precisions of style to which it gave birth, as a step in the right direction,

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